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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/210 of 19 December 2007, in which a biennial reporting cycle for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established, beginning in 2009, through a report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council.

In the last two years, the Institute has undertaken a major strategic reform. Moreover, it is excelling in programmatic achievements. Both the reforms of UNITAR and its programmatic achievements are the focus of the present report.

From a financial perspective, UNITAR has doubled its income in the last five years. The revised budget for 2008-2009 is 57 per cent higher than the actual expenditures of the prior period. Ninety-five per cent of the current budget is secured through special purpose grants. Globally, the Institute's ability to deliver on its mandate is positive with the exception of one area, that of core diplomatic training, an issue also raised in the present report.

The report recommends that UNITAR can play an important role in the overall effort to ensure more efficient service provision for training and research within the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/210, in which a biennial reporting cycle for UNITAR was established, beginning in 2009, through a report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council.[1] The present document follows the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (A/62/377).

2. As the first comprehensive report on the Institute's activities to the Economic and Social Council, it presents concrete actions taken and progress made in implementing the ongoing strategic reform of the Institute, a plan first shared with the Institute's Board of Trustees in July 2007 and referred to in the previous report of the Secretary-General (ibid.). The reform is pinned on four strategic priorities, namely: strengthening institutional capacity for training and research; enhancing human capital; building and strengthening strategic partnerships; and rationalizing the organizational structure. Major inroads have been made on all fronts, as described in section II of the present report, on taking the reforms forward.

3. Eighty thousand beneficiaries will have taken advantage of the Institute's capacity development opportunities in 2008-2009. Since 2007, the collective vision has been to transform the Institute into a centre of excellence, measured by international standards, recognized within and outside the United Nations system, for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems. In the light of calls for greater coherence within the United Nations system, and of General Assembly resolution 62/210, which, inter alia, reaffirmed the importance of a coordinated United Nations system-wide approach to research and training, section III of the report summarizes areas of achievement beginning by describing the Institute's leadership in delivering through integrated training service platforms; providing a privileged space for strategic policy thinking; strengthening the Institute's capacity development activities and approaches through innovative training methodologies; making in-roads in the area of governance training; and implementing measures to ensure results-based management in all areas of activity.

4. Section IV highlights indicators of how the reforms have been received within the United Nations compliance and oversight mechanisms. In less than two years, the Institute has: started introducing results-based management in its planning and budgeting, hence initiating a gradual shift in management culture; succeeded in implementing all but one outstanding recommendation of the Board of Auditors (see section IV); been recognized for its authority to delegate key areas of competency, thereby reaffirming its status as an autonomous Institute; and been supported by a reinvigorated and fully engaged Board of Trustees. The reforms and areas of achievement have translated into greater credibility and recognition of the Institute, as described in section IV of the report on measuring through results.

[1] In compliance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 62/210, in which the Assembly decided to streamline the reporting arrangements of UNITAR through: (a) consolidation of the reports of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the Institute; (b) submission of the new consolidated report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the General Assembly; and (c) establishment of a biennial reporting cycle starting from 2009.

5. Section V of the report details the financial situation of the Institute. UNITAR is demonstrating significant programme expansion and has doubled its income in the last five years. The revised budget for 2008-2009 is 57 per cent higher than the actual expenditures of the prior period. Ninety-five per cent of the current budget is secured through special purpose grants. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Financing of the core diplomatic training activities of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research" (A/63/592), from a financial perspective, the Institute's ability to deliver on its mandate is positive with the exception of core diplomatic training.

6. In section VI of the report, areas for continued progress point to where efforts will be concentrated in 2009 and beyond, effectively constituting a second phase in the reform of the Institute and moving towards the establishment of results-based management across the Institute's work; research on quality development and the establishment of a quality development framework to provide a basis for future implementation of quality standards, mechanisms and certification processes; the sustained utilization of technology-enhanced learning; and securing more adequate and predictable support for core diplomatic training. Positioning the Institute as a learning organization is also an ongoing effort, one which will be at the heart of efforts in the current and future bienniums.

7. In section VII, it is recommended that given the synergetic effect of the current joint leadership of UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College, the Institute can play an important role in laying the groundwork for more efficient service provision for training (and research) within the United Nations system.[2]

II. Taking the reforms forward

8. Prior to 2007, rather than a coherent Institute, UNITAR operated as a combination of stand-alone programmes. Since the introduction of the strategic reform plan, UNITAR is reaching the objectives set forth therein. The present section specifies actions taken on each of the four strategic directions identified in the reform phase of the Institute. It also provides information on actions yet to be taken in 2009 and beyond.

A. Strengthening institutional capacity for training and research

9. Regarding the first area of reform, strengthening institutional capacity for training and research, and in line with resolution 62/210, in which the General Assembly reaffirmed the relevance of the capacity development-related research activities of the Institute, UNITAR has established a research department as a central authority focused on knowledge systems. Through its research work on knowledge systems, the Institute is enhancing its capacity to develop knowledge, skills and attributes linked to particular forms of employment. The new research department will support the Institute's training activities by creating learning environments that are conducive to modern methods, pedagogies, and tools,

[2] Assistant Secretary-General Carlos Lopes is Executive Director of UNITAR and also Director of the United Nations System Staff College.

including technology-enhanced learning. The Institute is also actively incorporating tailored instructional methods based on adult learning principles.

10. UNITAR is currently piloting innovative learning tools supported by knowledge sharing and inter-institutional collaboration. As an example, the Institute has begun to develop a long-term project on training methodologies, beginning with terminology, methods and tools. Designed on a web 2.0 technology, this tool will be available to the United Nations system at large.

11. As a centre of excellence in standard-setting training methodologies, UNITAR is also scaling up its quality-assurance mechanisms aiming for the adoption of specific quality standards on its training activities (see sect. VI on areas for continued progress). The long-term objective is to add value to beneficiaries, delivering certified training programmes, which will contribute to personal development and career advancement (see also sect. VI).

B. Enhancing human capital

12. Regarding the second area of reform aimed at enhancing human capital, UNITAR has invested in maintaining and securing superior personnel so as to deliver fully on its mandate in the context of a new paradigm, one built around the principle of results-based management (see sect. III on programmatic achievements). Among others, UNITAR has secured several senior secondments from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

13. Moreover, concerted efforts have been made to align recruitment and placement practices within the Institute to support the implementation of a transparent, rigorous, competitive selection process to ensure not only a qualified work force but one that is gender and geographically balanced. In 2008, a new Appointment and Promotions Board was established within UNITAR.

14. In terms of gender distribution, UNITAR is one of the two United Nations entities that achieved overall gender balance among professional staff in 2007 (see A/63/364). In 2008, the geographic imbalances in staffing were effectively reversed, with six out of eight new recruits coming from developing countries. UNITAR has one of the youngest staffs in the United Nations system, with an average age of 43 years,[3] while the average age of United Nations staff is 45. Further, the Institute has recently dedicated, for the first time, a corporate training budget for its own staff to ensure their access to continuous learning and skills tuning. The aim of the training strategy is to sustain professional development and learning, building an organizational environment where staff development is valued, supported and rewarded, and a commitment to continuous learning is demonstrated at all levels.

C. Building and strengthening strategic partnerships

15. Regarding the third area of reform, in early 2008, UNITAR began to implement its partnerships and resource mobilization strategy upon the approval of

[3] This average includes "UNITAR fellows" contracts, a category that relates to positions of an average duration of three years which ensure flexibility and greater efficiency in administering medium-term positions.

the Institute's Board of Trustees. This strategy also responds to the General Assembly's request to develop further and expand the scope of partnerships (resolution 62/210, para. 4).

16. The overall objectives of the strategy are: (a) to strengthen ties within other United Nations system agencies and more specifically with other United Nations research and training institutions; (b) to enhance the overall performance capacity of the Institute by developing strong and sustainable relationships with strategic donor countries and with the private sector and foundations; (c) to strengthen the Institute's capacities to deliver on training requirements by building a strong bridge with recognized academic institutions in order to develop comprehensive e-learning courses in multiple fields of ongoing activity; and (d) to establish a regional presence for United Nations capacity-building through UNITAR support offices and in-country capacity-building and programming.

17. As early as 2007, strategic focus has been placed on the Nordic countries to strengthen support to the Institute. Among others, cooperation has been initiated with academic institutions in Finland, Norway and Sweden in the fields of peace security diplomacy and humanitarian affairs.

18. In 2008, relationships with a broader community of supporters and collaborators have been developed including the following countries: Brazil, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Oman, the Russian Federation, Spain, South Africa and Turkey.

19. For instance, a key agreement was reached with the Government of Spain, making it the first ranked public donor to the Institute as of 2008 (see sect. V). The agreement touches on a broad range of areas for collaboration which are defined as follows: strengthening the Institute's capacity to deliver training activities in the Spanish language to address the needs of Ibero-American countries; strengthening capacity and implementing recently established recommendations in the fields of international migration and development (see sect. III); and enhancing the application of knowledge systems innovation approaches (see sect. VI).

20. In addition and further to the Board's recommendations, discussions with Brazil and South Africa have been initiated for the establishment of representational offices in Brasilia and Pretoria.

21. Furthermore, in addition to earmarked funding, efforts to increase non-earmarked funds to the Institute have intensified. In line with the recommendation of 2008 of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in which the Advisory Committee recommended that the Institute and the Executive Director continue to make further efforts to increase all voluntary contributions, the Institute's fund-raising efforts for non-earmarked funds have increased significantly. In 2008-2009, voluntary contributions amounted to US$ 1,128,979 compared to original forecasts of $850,000. In addition, some countries have indicated that they may increase voluntary contributions over the course of 2010.

D. Rationalizing the organizational structure

22. The fourth area of reform deals with rationalizing the organizational structure of the Institute. Guided by the drive for greater coherence and accountability, clear

lines of authority and accountability have been instituted with regular performance evaluations and systematic reviews of all job descriptions. A more vertical structure was adopted in the Institute, with three departments (training, research and support services), each to be run by Directors who report directly to the Executive Director. The directorship positions are expected to be filled in the course of the next biennium (see sect. V).

23. In addition and similar to the actions outlined in General Assembly resolution 63/250 on human resources management, since 2008, the conditions governing UNITAR personnel contracts have been harmonized so as to ensure efficiency, equity and consistency across the Institute. Furthermore, UNITAR has been granted the authority from the Secretary-General to classify posts up to the P-5 level (see sect. IV on measuring through results).

24. Last, new integrated central support services have been established in order to ensure coherence within UNITAR, and of UNITAR vis-à-vis the outside. These support services include sections for: human resources; finance and administration; partnerships and resource mobilization; communications and information technology support; and representational offices.

III. Programmatic achievements

25. In lieu of a report on activities, the present section focuses on results, presenting areas of achievements in the Institute's efforts to: deliver integrated approaches to learning; provide a privileged platform for strategic policy thinking; strengthen its capacity-development activities and approaches through innovative training methodologies; establish in-roads in the area of global governance training and support; and ensure the gradual introduction of results-based management tools in all of its areas of activity.

A. Environment

26. Each year, close to 2,500 beneficiaries receive environment-related training from UNITAR.[4] The Institute has established a solid reputation in specific areas of environmental capacity-building linked to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. As part of the Institute's reform, an overarching Environment Unit was created in 2007. In 2008-2009, UNITAR developed an "Internal Environment Strategy 2009-2010", which was presented and welcomed by its Board in January 2009. The strategy facilitates information exchange and collaboration on environmental activities across some nine different programmes and sections of the Institute that engage in environmental training. It covers the thematic areas of climate change, chemicals and waste management, environmental governance and law, and biodiversity.

27. The overarching goal of UNITAR environment activities is to strengthen the capacity of partner countries, organizations and individuals to address identified capacity gaps and to reach environmental goals, through innovative training and

[4] This figure relates to training in the field of chemicals and waste management, climate change, and environmental governance. It is expected to increase further in 2009, given initiation of new activities, including in the field of biodiversity.

research. Relevant activities build on best practices, strengthening synergies with partners, and are conducted jointly with United Nations partners, consistent with the principle of delivering as one. By focusing on training design, delivery and evaluation, UNITAR seeks to become a recognized service provider in the United Nations system for environmental training and capacity development.

28. In the area of climate change, for example, the Institute has developed jointly with UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the concept for a One United Nations Training Service Platform for Climate Change. The aim of such a platform is to provide services in the areas of knowledge management, joint training material development and training delivery related to the implementation of the anticipated new international regime on climate change. The platform is closely linked to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination process which facilitates a One United Nations approach in the area of climate change. In the area of chemicals waste and management, UNITAR is supporting projects in more than 60 countries during the course of 2008-2009 to develop capacity concerning the implementation of international chemicals agreements such as the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. All relevant projects are implemented in partnership with member organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

29. Further, UNITAR is committed to leading United Nations efforts in the area of climate neutrality (see A/63/592). To achieve this goal, UNITAR has established an ambitious "Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy: 2009-2010", which was adopted by the Institute's Board of Trustees in January 2009 for immediate implementation.

B. Strategic policy discussions

30. The Institute offers a privileged platform for high-level strategic discussions, reaching out annually to over 2,500 decision makers. In turn, this role has contributed to raising the profile of UNITAR within and outside the United Nations system as a convener of high-quality meetings dedicated to enhancing knowledge, sharing lessons learned and facilitating dialogue on key policy issues among United Nations senior management and the international community as a whole. UNITAR has strengthened its position as a knowledge hub for the United Nations system and external stakeholders, serving global decision-making processes in key locations, in particular Geneva, New York and Turin.

31. UNITAR has become an important convenor of major policy discussions among senior United Nations officials. Since 2007, every year at the end of August or in early September, the Institute co-organizes the annual retreat of the Secretary-General and his senior staff in Turin, in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College and the Department of Management of the Secretariat.

32. In addition, since 2001, UNITAR gathers the Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General each year in Switzerland for a strategy meeting dedicated to enhancing United Nations practice in the fields of prevention and conflict resolution. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General Seminar, now (also) organized in association with the United Nations System Staff College, brings together the heads of United Nations peace operations from around the world with the senior United Nations staff and heads of agencies.

responsible for the prevention and resolution of conflict. Since 2007, this annual seminar has taken on further strategic relevance since it is dovetailed by parallel internal departmental heads of mission conferences organized respectively with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in conjunction with the Department of Field Support. The Peacebuilding Support Office has also been actively involved in the deliberations.

33. Finally, UNITAR organizes high-level policy discussions that are open to the public in the form of the Geneva Lecture Series. Jointly launched with the United Nations Office at Geneva in 2008, the Series has included the first ever public town hall meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and has since followed with other events featuring, for example, Nobel Peace Prize winners and renowned personalities. Each lecture gathers no less than 1,200 participants. In contrast to the Secretary-General and United Nations Secretariat retreats, for which proceedings and results are kept confidential for use by United Nations senior management, the Geneva Lecture Series initiative intends to synthesize and disseminate timely knowledge on policy issues being discussed through a dedicated public website and discussion forums, organized in partnership with various media outlets. The Geneva Lecture Series website builds on the Institute's efforts to enhance its communication and visibility with a new dedicated Internet site that provides a single multilingual entry point to the Institute's services and knowledge databases.

C. Satellite applications (new technologies)

34. Progressively, UNITAR is establishing itself as the methodological partner of choice of Member States and for the United Nations system based on its innovative training methodologies and technologies employed.

35. For example, UNITAR, through its programme on operational satellite applications (UNOSAT), is now the United Nations reference for efficient and proficient satellite-based analysis with internal capability to acquire, process and analyse data from all commercial and scientific satellites.[5] The Institute mobilizes a wide network of space partners worldwide. These include the European Space Agency (ESA), the national space agencies of Canada, France and Norway, national satellite operators and providers in France, Italy, Norway, Turkey, and the United States of America, and a number of other companies and scientific entities working in satellite applications, and the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters formed by ESA together with Argentina, Canada, France, India, Japan, the United States Geological Survey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Together, these space partners enable UNITAR to carry out research on new applications and to deliver satellite solutions to humanitarian and development experts within the United Nations, national Governments, and a growing number of non-governmental organizations. Other types of partners complete this network, such as the United States Department of State, the European Union Joint Research Centre, the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN), Google Maps, and so forth. In 2008, over 250 complex maps and analyses were produced by UNITAR

[5] In January 2009, UNOSAT became fully integrated into the UNITAR research department, such that its technologies and applied research are now streamlined into UNITAR training activities in various fields.

experts in this field, based on satellite imagery and data bought from commercial providers or acquired from partners.

36. Indeed, to date, UNITAR provides geographic information and analysis to most of the international humanitarian community and a large number of national and development users. In 2008 alone, it was requested to activate its rapid mapping support in 38 humanitarian emergencies.

37. The Institute's satellite imagery analysis is employed as a decision support tool by United Nations system agencies and programmes in the fields of emergency response as well as recovery and development planning. Through its research and innovation in the area of satellite applications, UNITAR is extending its reach of beneficiaries in additional fields such as peace and security, human rights, disaster reduction and environment protection.

38. The knowledge generated through sustained research and application is transferred to beneficiaries through dedicated and standard training modules spanning from basic geographic information systems (GIS) know-how to the use of geographic information for peacebuilding. In 2008, UNITAR offered professional training to about 100 national experts and experts in training, in Asia, Africa and Central America. The Institute is expanding its outreach for technology-based training methodologies in collaboration with national space agencies and the European Space Agency (ESA).

D. Support to governance

39. In the field of global governance, the Institute is making important headway in responding to capacity-development needs and niches, be it in the fields of local development, public finance and trade, international migration, or public administration.

1. Local development

40. UNITAR is one of the first partners in the United Nations system to have extended a formal link for training opportunities with local authorities in the area of local development. With the objective of operationalizing access to basic services, in the last five years UNITAR has become the hub for information, communication and training between local authorities and other parts of the United Nations system, academic institutions and other local actors such as public and private companies and civil society. Since 2007, 1,620 local authorities strengthened their capacities to deliver integrated approaches to sustainable development and urbanization through UNITAR training courses, which are implemented by a network of International Training Centres for Local Actors/Authorities (CIFAL) around the world.

41. In 2009, in its resolution 22/8, the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted guidelines on access to basic services for all. In this resolution as in others that preceded it, UNITAR continues to be the explicit reference for engaging local stakeholders in the process of developing, and now of implementing, these guidelines. The guidelines will also be

2. Public finance and trade

42. Now more than at any other time, UNITAR support in the field of public finance and trade to Government officials from developing countries, including least developed countries, and economies in transition is of critical relevance.

43. Each year, the Institute offers 50 six-week online courses benefiting some 2,500 senior and middle-level officials in ministries of finance, planning, trade as well as in central banks. The principal objectives of the courses are to learn about efficient and effective public spending, and how to manage public finance and expenditures. The Institute thus fills an important niche by addressing issues relating to financial governance, poverty reduction strategies, trade, intellectual property, financial regulation, financia' egotiations, capital market development as well as debt management. In addition to strengthening capacities in this field, UNITAR provides opportunities for networking among Government and private sector officials, and supports the establishment of communities of practice to sustain training within local and regional institutions.

3. International migration

44. Human mobility is an area of global governance for which the Secretary-General has called upon greater engagement by the United Nations (see General Assembly resolution 63/225 on international migration and development). For two decades, UNITAR has provided capacity-building to Government officials on migration and refugee issues. As from 2010, it will focus on capacity-building on the African continent and Ibero-America regions. In 2009, UNITAR signed a comprehensive agreement with the International Organization for Migration covering various areas of programming, including the fields of international migration law; national pilot projects; policy seminars; satellite imagery support, and others.

45. In the second half of 2009, UNITAR will chair the Global Migration Group, the inter-agency coordinating body for 14 United Nations and non-United Nations bodies that work in this field. UNITAR will convey a collective strategy note, on behalf of the Group, to the third Global Forum on Migration and Development taking place in Athens on 4 and 5 November 2009. Furthermore, UNITAR continues to act as the reliable and informative convener of seminars at United Nations Headquarters in New York to inform, educate and advance policy thinking and dialogue on migration-related topics. In 2008, at the seventh coordination meeting on international migration convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, it was recognized that UNITAR plays a central role in maintaining the centrality of international migration on the United Nations calendar in the context of: the biennial resolution of the General Assembly, the General Assembly High Level Dialogues (2006 and 2013), and the Global Forum process. Since 2007, close to a thousand beneficiaries have taken part in migration-related trainings provided by UNITAR.

4. Public administration

46. In line with a note by the Secretariat entitled "The human factor in capacity-

responding to the calls of countries requesting support to build the capacities of their public sector.

47. For example, beginning in 2009, UNITAR is working with the Government of Cape Verde to elaborate a national capacity-development strategy, given that individual and institutional capacity are central pillars of the public sector reform in Cape Verde. Upon the request from the Ministry of State Reform, the Institute is leading the governmental initiative to design a capacity-development plan for public servants, which is at the core of enhancing the effectiveness and competitiveness of that country's public sector. Similar requests have been addressed to UNITAR by several countries. In partnership with UNDP, a new online course on democratic governance will also be launched in 2009.

E. Peacekeeping

48. UNITAR is introducing a results-based management framework for all of its areas of capacity development (see sect. VI on areas for continued progress). In 2008, in line with outstanding recommendations of the Board of Auditors, UNITAR completely reorganized its activities in the field of peacekeeping. The newly established Peacekeeping Training Programme will offer a results-measured, systematic and more comprehensive preparation for civilian, military and police personnel eager to serve in peacekeeping and peace support operations.

49. The peacekeeping curriculum is being established and will be offered online as well as in the form of face-to-face training activities, depending on the subject matter and the target audience. In response to the Secretary-General's call for support from within the United Nations system in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1820 (2008), a first course on protection of civilians in peacekeeping and peace support operations is being developed, with a specific module on sexual exploitation and abuse in partnership with Open University United Kingdom.

50. The large number of distance learning beneficiaries of the Institute's previous peacekeeping training programme may have responded to a gap in training requirements in this field. However, UNITAR needed to overhaul its offer in this domain to improve standards and to build credibility.

IV. Measuring through results

51. Buttressed by the institutional reforms within UNITAR and the significant achievements in developing above-par capacity-development content, the Institute's results can be measured through the recognition it has gained from oversight entities within the United Nations system. A handful of examples are provided herein: the Office of Legal Affairs issued for the first time, a consolidated opinion concerning the parameters of the Institute's autonomous status; UNITAR responded with the implementation of many outstanding past recommendations of the Board of Auditors; and UNITAR benefits from an engaged Board of Trustees and supportive

52. Furthermore, the Executive Director of UNITAR was granted the delegation of authority in two important areas, the first dealing with the classification of posts (up to P-5 level) as mentioned in section I; the other in the area of procurement.

53. In addition, with a view to strengthening efficiency, transparency and accountability, for the first time, in November 2007, UNITAR submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions a revised budget format using the standard results-based budgeting framework. In line with the principle of greater transparency within the Institute's administration, all audit reports are available as from 2009 to the members of the UNITAR Board of Trustees. An important dimension of UNITAR efforts on results-based communication will be to introduce real-time online access programme budget implementation for the Board of Trustees, the auditors and the Advisory Committee. This dimension will be addressed and specific actors and action will be identified during the 2010-2011 programme budget process with the goal of making the Institute a front-runner in the United Nations system concerning transparency.

54. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/377), in terms of accountability, in the last year, UNITAR succeeded in addressing all outstanding recommendations of the Board of Auditors except one relating to information technology (IT).[6] The IT budget has been increased to enable these recommendations to be gradually addressed, and an IT steering committee to overview the Institute's IT strategy was established in 2009. More generally, current and future recommendations of the auditors will be addressed by the monitoring and evaluation section that will be established in 2009 (see sect. VI).

55. Finally, UNITAR is supported by an engaged and pre-eminent governance body, its Board of Trustees, which since 2007, meets on a semi-annual basis. The Institute is also guided by a solid set of oversight mechanisms and policy directives within the Institute, which includes several new internal boards such as one for personnel issues, one for the implementation of the delegation of procurement authority granted to the current Executive Director, and so on.

V. Financial situation of the Institute

56. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 was revised and approved by the Institute's Board of Trustees at its session held in January 2009 (after the original had been presented in December 2007). The revised financial information reflects positive developments that have occurred during 2008. More generally, the funding of the UNITAR special purpose grants continues to increase satisfactorily. However, while the non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the General Fund have also increased, that type of funding remains low.

57. In accordance with the interim financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2008, the overall income showed an increase of 45 per cent, from $12,273,028 in 2006 to $17,766,256 in 2008. Expenditure increased by 33 per cent, from $13,469,811 in 2006 to $17,968,733 in 2008. The excess of expenditure over

[6] The recommendation in question relates to the implementation of ISO 17799 within UNITAR.

income is attributable to the fact that reserves were built up from contributions paid in advance in previous years for projects that were implemented in 2008.

58. A tight monitoring of funds and cash flow has been established in the Institute following a prudent approach to future commitments. New posts are established only when funds are available and decisions are taken with minimum risk. Pending receipt of funds, the establishment of Directors' posts has been deferred (see sect. II).

VI. Areas for continued progress

59. The strategic plan for the biennium 2010-2011, which is to be developed through a participatory process in the second half of 2009, will comprise an important milestone in articulating the vision and set of supporting objectives for UNITAR for the next biennium. The items described in the present section as areas for continued progress constitute an indicative list. They include: the establishment of results-based management across the Institute's work; research on quality development and engagement with other actors to establish quality standards and deliver certified training; expansion of technology-enhanced learning tools; and securing more adequate and predictable support for core diplomatic training. Positioning the Institute as a learning organization is also an ongoing effort, one which will be at the heart of efforts in the current and future bienniums.

A. Results-based management

60. In 2009, a task team on results-based management was formed. It first developed a blue print on how to operationalize results-based management at UNITAR as it pertains to programme planning and budget; human resource management; programme monitoring and evaluation; results-based communication; and internal results-based management training and capacity development. As indicated in the present report, the implementation phase for some of these items pertaining to planning and budgeting, in particular, began in 2008.

61. One of the results-based management "building blocks" pertains to monitoring and evaluation. Following the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in 2006-2007, a monitoring and evaluation section within the Institute's research department will be created in the second half of 2009. Its role will be to systematize evaluation for learning at UNITAR, and to support a cyclical system of planning such that evaluation results are reflected in future programme planning.

B. Quality development

62. Since 2009, in terms of quality development,[7] UNITAR is in the process of analysing how the "International Organization for Standards Quality Management, Assurance and Metrics", which represents a generic model for introducing quality approaches in learning, education and training, can be applied to the Institute's

[7] "Quality development" in this context refers to a set of quality assurance mechanisms.

realities. This process will continue through 2010 to analyse the adequacy of the model to the Organization's requirements. In parallel UNITAR, with several other institutions, including United Nations system agencies and national accreditation authorities, engaged in a consultative exercise conducted by the European Foundation for Quality in eLearning to consider the Open ECBCheck — a new accreditation and quality improvement scheme for e-learning programmes and institutions in the field of international capacity development. In particular, during 2009, the Institute will pilot this criteria scheme in two of its e-learning courses so as to provide feedback to the group of core agencies participating in the round of consultations.

63. Furthermore, a number of concrete measures are taking shape and will apply to materials developed by or for the Institute. These measures include the establishment of eminent advisory boards (per thematic area and as required) that will review and approve new course content. For example, and mindful of the call made in General Assembly resolution 62/210, in the case of peacekeeping curricula, content development will be systematically scrutinized by an advisory board comprised of eminent specialists and practitioners in the field of peacekeeping, both from within and outside the United Nations. Other measures will include partnerships with renowned academic institutions that will co-certify UNITAR training material, and by contracting pre-eminent scholars for course content development.

C. Technology for learning

64. UNITAR is also investing to sustain technology-enhanced learning activities. Apart from increasing the offers for its e-learning training catalogue, which will soon include a series of courses in the Spanish language (see sect. II), the Institute will incorporate a broader use of technology-enhanced learning tools to improve the learning experience for its beneficiaries. Capitalizing on technological tools for learning, UNITAR is incorporating greater flexibility in order to respond to different learning profiles and needs, including through non-linear courses, guided learning and guided self-assessment tools, peer-to-peer assessments, and collaborative activities. Some of these pedagogical features were incorporated in an online course UNITAR recently launched in the area of governance in urban sanitation. The vision is to capitalize on technology as an enabler for learning. In doing so, UNITAR intends to support effective and independent learners, and to foster a sustained and positive attitude towards lifelong learning.

D. Core diplomatic training

65. Owing to its legacy as an Institute assisting developing and least developed countries in the fields of multilateral diplomacy and international cooperation ("core training programmes" as it is referred to in its Statute), UNITAR has continued to offer core diplomatic training in United Nations locations. Biennially, UNITAR trains close to 4,000 diplomats worldwide, of whom 60 per cent represent developing regions and 40 per cent developed regions. However, and as outlined in resolution 62/210, to date, UNITAR is totally self-funded and does not receive any

66. In 2009, the Secretary-General recommended that UNITAR receive an annual subvention from the regular budget in the amount of $600,000 to address the deficit in core diplomatic training owing to its unique nature and narrow beneficiary base, in order to avert the negative consequences that could entail should the Institute cease to offer multilateral diplomacy training (see A/63/592). In March 2009, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, recognizing the importance of core diplomatic training, recommended the approval, on an exceptional basis for the biennium 2010-2011, of an annual subvention in the amount of $600,000 (see A/63/744). In the resumed session of the Fifth Committee, in late March 2009, Member States decided to defer decision on the matter (see A/C.5/63/L.41).

VII. Recommendations

67. In the context of current efforts to explore strategies on how best to leverage and build on the strengths of the United Nations training and research institutes, UNITAR can play an important role in laying the groundwork for more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system, in particular given the synergetic effect of the current joint leadership of UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College. Member States should support UNITAR in this endeavour.